

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7762
INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY FREETWON

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 1870

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MILI SL GV LI

SUBJECT: LIBERIAN/ SIERRA LEONEAN/ GUINEAN RELATIONS

REF: MONROVIA 1655 (NOTAL)

1. EVENING APRIL 11, ELTV ANNOUNCED MINFORAFFS WEEKS AND MINDEF WILLIAMS HAD TRAVELLED TO FREETOWN CARRYING QTE SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT TOLBERT UNQTE. CONTENTS NOT KNOW BUT QTE INFORMED SOURCES UNQTE SAID IT DEALT QTE NOTABLY WITH DEFENSE MATTERS UNQTE. LOCAL AMERICAN SOURCE WHO WAS PRESENT AT AIRPORT STATES PAIR ALSO VISITED GUINEA.
2. EMBASSY SPECULATES MESSAGE MIGHT BE RELATED EITHER TO SOME SORT OF MUTUAL DEFENSE AGREEMENT (THERE HAS BEEN SPORADIC TALK OF THIS FOR SOME MONTHS IN MONROVIA) OR POSSIBLY WITH REQUEST FROM STEVENS FOR LIBERIAN UNDERSTANDING PRIOR TO FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE.
3. NEWLY APPOINTED ASST MINDEF FOR COAST GUARD AFFAIRS REPORTED TO CHIEF US MILITARY MISSION MORNING APRIL 12 PRESIDENT TOLBERT REMARKED TO HIM IN CONTEXT RECENT ACCIDENT INVOLVING SOLE LIBERIAN COAST GUARD CUTTER THAT CUTTER IS BEST MEANS OF GETTING PEOPLE QUICKLY TO LIBERIAN LAND/ SEA BOUNDAR AREAS AND THAT HE, TOLBERT, HAS SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT
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GUINEA AND SIERRA LEONE. WHILE TOLBERT HAS IN PAST MONTHS OUTWARDLY SPOKEN OF HIS CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BOTH THESE COUNTRIES, WE WONDER IF PERHAPS INWARDLY HE MAY BE BEGINNING TO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO GUINEA. WE BASE THIS ON THREE POSSIBILITIES: FIRST, TOLBERT MAY BE WONDERING ABOUT DEATH OF AMILCAR CABRAL AND ASKING HIMSELF HOW THIS COULD HAVE HAPPENED IN COUNTRY WHICH IS ALLEGED TO HAVE SUCH STRONG INTERNAL SECURITY APPARATUS AND HE MAY BE WONDERING IF EXPLANATION IS AS SIMPLE AS WAS STATED AT THE TIME OF DEATH OF CABRAL. SECOND, RAPID DISPATCH BY TOURE OF GOOD - WILL DELEGATION FOLLOWING PRINCE BROWNE AFFAIR MAY HAVE SURPRISED TOLBERT. DURING LOYALTY DEMONSTRATION NOTED REFTEL PRESIDENT, ALTHOUGH THANKING TOURE FOR HIS DELEGATION AND STEVENS FOR HIS MESSAGES AS BEING BROTHERLY AND FRATERNAL ACTS, VEHEMENTLY STRESSED ABILITY LIBERIANS TO HANDLE THEIR OWN SECURITY PROBLEMS AND MADE IT CLEAR HE DID NOT NEED HELP. IT QUITE POSSIBLE TOLBERT WAS MIFFED AT NOT TOO SUBTLE IMPLICATIONS OF MAKE- UP OF GOG DELEGATION. FINALLY, PRESENCE OF MINDEF WILLIAMS IN GOL VISITING TEAM IS SIGNIFICANT. WHILE AT FIRST LOGICAL IN CONTEXT OF MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS, WILLIAMS HAS OFTEN IMPLIED TO US OFFICIALS HERE HIS OWN PERSONAL DISLIKE AND SUSPICIONS OF TOURE REGIME AND IDEA OF ANY MILITARY AGREEMENT BETWEEN LIBERIA AND GUINEA.

4. THE ABOVE REASONING LEADS US TO FEEL TOLBERT MAY RPT MAY BE TAKING A SECOND LOOK AT HIS RELATIONS WITH TOURE AND STEVENS AND THAT HIS EARLIER WARMTH COULD BE SLIGHTLY COOLING. WE DOUBT HE WILL EVER PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGE THIS AS IT WOULD NOT BE IN KEEPING WITH HIS DESIRE TO BUILD HIS IMAGE IN AFRICA. SHOULD THIS BE THE CASE HOWEVER THERE ARE MANY HERE IN LIBERIA PARTICULARLY IN OLD GUARD WHO WOULD BE VERY RELIEVED.

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